

## Learning module 3

### Breakfast...Lunch...Dinner?

Objective: Students will examine a sample of historical fiction and describe Continental Army fare while constructing a journal entry from first-person perspective.

Directions: In the third Learning module, students will work as a small group in making decisions and fostering discussion; however, each student must remember that he/she is also moving through the steps of the module from the perspective of an individual Continental soldier who is ultimately assessing his/her ability to successfully “survive and thrive” while encamped at Valley Forge.

**Step A.** Sample of Historical Fiction from Forge by Laurie Halse Anderson  
(<http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/a/laurie-halse-anderson/forge.htm>)

The soldiers of the Continental Army were just like most people, always hungry! The problem was that there was no consistent supply of food to feed the army- in the middle of winter this can be somewhat of a problem! To truly understand the nature of hunger at the Valley Forge encampment you will need to read a piece of text taken from a wonderful historical fiction novel, Forge.

Students will actively read the sample of historical fiction text- this can be done individually or as a whole group. As they read, they should also complete the graphic organizer exercise that accompanies.

Once students have completed the reading text piece and the graphic organizer exercise they may award themselves up to **5 Survival Points** on their Survival Rubric based on the self-assessed quality of their work.

**Step B.**      **How to make firecake...a journal entry.**

**First Person Point of View-** is a point of view in which an "I" or "we" serves as the narrator of a piece of fiction.  
(<http://fictionwriting.about.com/od/glossary/g/firstperson.htm>)

In this exercise you will write a short (no longer than one page) journal entry using first person writing perspective...in other words, from the point of view of a Continental soldier! Your topic is to write a recipe and instructions for making firecake that you eat in the Valley Forge encampment. You should certainly consult the historical fiction graphic organizer exercise to help you construct your writing. Remember, your instructions/reflections may be useful to your fellow Continental soldiers in the future!

If you successfully complete your journal entry you may award yourself up to **5 Survival Points** on your Survival Rubric.

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## *Extension Activities*

### Research Investigation

\*Using the Internet, see if you can find any documented recipes for firecake as it would have been made by Continental Army soldiers. Were there any different types of firecake- perhaps different based on the region or culture of the makers?

\*What would the rations of a Continental soldier be? Use the following link to find out!

<http://www.powdermag.org/lessons/Revolution%20-%20A%20Day%20in%20the%20Life%20of%20Soldier%20Lesson.pdf>

### **Forge**

**Laurie Halse Anderson**

**(Chapter XVI: pages 82-84)**

**Monday, December 22, 1777**

***“What have you for your dinner boys?”***

***“Nothing but firecake and water, Sir.”***

***“...What is your supper, lads?”***

***“Firecake and water, Sir”***

**-Diary of Dr. Albigeance Waldo, Surgeon, First Connecticut Regiment, Valley Forge**

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The cloth bag held only coarse-ground flour.

“A pox on all generals in the world,” swore Silvenus after the sergeant left us. “We’ve got to make firecake.”

“What’s that?” asked Eben.

Silvenus swore violently. I cannot tell you the words he used out of respect for your tender ears.

“You two”- he pointed at Aaron and Henry- “fetch us water from th creek yonder. The rest of you build the fire higher and then find me rocks the size of your hand or bigger. I’ll borrow a cook pot from somewhere.”

We were all dazed with hunger and lack of sleep and did as he demanded without question. Once the rocks were gathered, Silvenus picked out the flattest and made us rinse them in the creek before he set them right on the coals of the fire.

With all of the elements in place, the cooking began.

Silvenus slowly poured our flour into the pot of muddy water, stopping every now and then to stir the concoction with a bayonet blade until it was thick as stonemason’s mortar. Then Greenlaw, who had the longest arms of us all, wrapped his hands in some rags to shield it from the heat and spread the dough onto the stones with the blade. We crouched around the fire, wordless. The dough hissed and sputtered. One of the rocks exploded, sending a piece of firecake into the heart of the flames.

Fellows from the artillery units gathered behind us.

**“We had firecake three times yesterday,” one said. “Best eat when they’re hot enough to burn your tongue. That way you don’t taste so much.”**

**I’d expect to smell bread, for bread was little more than flour and water. Instead, the firecakes gave off a scorched smell, like damp charcoal. The thinnest of smears caught fire right atop the rock.**

**“Must be they’re ready,” Silvenus said.**

**Greenlaw wrapped his hand again chiseled each piece free, then scooped them from the rock and laid them atop his haversack spread on the ground. Smoke rose from charred edges.**

**“Who’s first?” Silvenus asked.**

**A few fellows shook their heads and stepped backward.**

**“I’ll take a piece,” I said.**

**“Good lad.” Silvenus broke a piece of firecake in two pieces, handed one to me, and bit into the other.**

**I did the same.**

**“What’s it taste like?” asked Greenlaw.**

**“Ashes and dirt.” I gnawed the hot splinters. “It’s hard enough to break rat’s teeth.”**

**Silvenus held up another piece. “Are ye real soldiers, or boys who just want to march in the sunshine? Eat this to find out. Who’s next?”**

**“Not me.” Burns said. “I’m off to find something better.”**

**After he left. Henry stepped up, then Greenlaw; and one by one, the rest joined in.**

### **Graphic Organizer**

**Directions-** Now that you have read the historical fiction piece, spend a few minutes carefully examining the text again. As you examine, below make a list of any items that you believe are directly related to the process of making firecake.

